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THE FRIDAY LETTER

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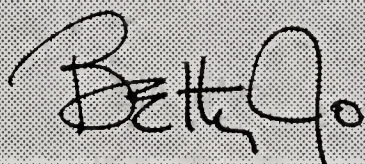
FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

As you can see, The Friday Letter has a "new" look. And, as you read through it, not only a new look, but some new features too! It is very important to me to continue to find better ways to communicate important, and interesting, items to ALL employees in FNS, and I look to the "new" Friday Letter to help me do just that!

The goal for the "new" Friday Letter is to be more people-oriented, interesting and informative so that it will be read and enjoyed by everyone!

This is a "transition period" for the "new" Friday Letter. In the next several issues you will see different features and layouts. A survey will soon follow to get feedback from you so we have the best possible product to serve everyone!

How exciting!



Bill Allows States to Borrow Against '91 WIC Allocations

by Phil Shanholtzer

Legislation was passed in Congress Thursday, June 28, to allow states to borrow up to 3 percent of the amounts of their 1991 WIC allocations for use in fiscal year 1990. If, for example, a state had a \$10 million appropriation in FY 1991, it could borrow up to \$300,000 for use in FY 1990. The bill did not include any provisions about how the money would be repaid.

Under the bill, introduced Monday, June 25, by Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio), States are required to get approval from the Secretary of Agriculture before they borrow funds, and must submit a plan showing how they will manage their caseloads to meet funding limitations. The borrowed money can be used only to maintain caseloads, not to expand the program.

WIC was in the spotlight all week in Washington. The National Association of WIC Directors held a news conference Tuesday, June 26, and FNS Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen appeared as a witness the following day at a hearing of the House Budget Committee's Task Force on Human Resources.

Nelsen, who was accompanied at the witness table by Supplemental Food Programs Director Ron Vogel and Office of Analysis and Evaluation Director Jan Lilja, faced pointed questioning from task force members. Several of the Congressional representatives on the panel argued that WIC should be made an entitlement program, rather than the grant program that it is now. All called for increased funding, and scolded Nelsen and FNS for not seeking a supplemental appropriation.

Nelsen emphasized that WIC has received increasing support from Congress and the White House, including President Bush, throughout its existence. She pointed out that the program reached an all-time high of 4.6 million participation in March, and expects to serve a monthly average of about 4.4 million for fiscal year 1990 -- a 6 percent increase over last year.

"There are a number of variables that make WIC difficult to manage even in the best of times," Nelsen told the task force. "This year, with rising food prices and an unstable situation with infant formula rebates to the states, it has been very difficult to administer the program."

Nelsen said WIC's problems are manageable, and that several states are experiencing few problems with the program. She assured the task force members that "we certainly are willing to work with you" to keep WIC working well.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE...

Marvin Eskin

by Beverly King

Marvin Eskin began his career in USDA 24 years ago with the old Consumer and Marketing Service. He has worked with the commodity programs all these years and, in fact, has been referred to by some as an "institution"! He certainly has been with the Agency long enough to have a remarkable institutional memory. As this issue of the Friday Letter goes to press, Marvin has officially retired. He will truly be missed by his co-workers in FNS, the Agricultural Marketing Service and the

tributing agents and industry representatives he has worked with over the years.

Many individuals have written letters and notes to **Marvin** as he retires reminiscing about his career in FNS and referring to his accomplishments and achievements over the years. One such note from Assistant Secretary Bertini indicated, "very few people retire from any career with the satisfaction that they have made a significant difference in the lives of many children. You are one of the few." **Marvin** has indeed made many contributions to FNS and leaves behind for his staff and co-workers memories of an individual who has always tried to be "very accommodating, flexible and fair," in his dealings with others.

Marvin has spent most of his adult life involved with food-related work. He graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in dairy husbandry. Prior to joining USDA in 1966 he worked for a Washington food broker and he also worked in the dairy division of Food Fair, a grocery chain.

When **Marvin** began working at the Consumer and Marketing Service his division director was Neil Freeman. Since that time he has worked for more than 18 different bosses. No wonder he has learned to be so flexible! Many of those former bosses were among the 120 plus people who participated in **Marvin's** retirement festivities.

Marvin is the type of person who isn't ashamed to admit that he likes his work. He has many accomplishments to his credit in his work with the commodity programs including a Departmental Honor Award he earned in 1987.

He has always been especially proud of the Kosher program which he initiated. Under this program special arrangements are made for Jewish schools to be able to use USDA commodities at no additional cost to the government. **Marvin** has also been instrumental in the development of the State Option Contract program and has worked very hard with the Department of Defense to provide commodity assistance to overseas military schools.

Marvin has varied interests outside work which he is looking forward to



Anybody recognize this man?

devoting more time to now that he has retired. He is planning a number of trips with his wife of 41 years, Charlotte. In fact, his first trip is to Charleston, South Carolina. He will be spending a week at a local college learning to prepare Southern foods. **Marvin** is very devoted to his family and also is looking forward to spending more time with his 3 grandchildren. **Marvin** is also an avid fan of the Redskins and the University of Maryland football team, the Terrapins, so he will continue to follow his favorite teams very closely.

One thing **Marvin** will always be remembered for is being a founding father of the FNS Hot Dog Club. The club was formed in 1969 just after FNS was created. At first only **Marvin** and people in his Branch participated. However, word quickly spread and by the time FNS had moved to Park Center, **Marvin** and **Gene Pitman** were serving 50 or more hot dogs a week. Each year any extra money in the "hot dog" account was donated to Children's Hospital, which usually amounted to about \$500 per year. **John Bode**, former Assistant Secretary was also a real fan of the Hot Dog Club. Sometimes he would order a hot dog and eat it "on the run" to the Hill to testify!

The Hot Dog Club ended with **Gene Pitman's** retirement last year. However, **Gene** came back recently to help **Marvin** put on one last hot dog day and they served over 120 hot dogs!

While retirement offers interesting opportunities for **Marvin**, he says he will truly miss FNS and the wonderful people he has known over the years. We do know he will especially miss his

lively FNS carpool. Several of the carpool members have been riding with **Marvin** for almost 20 years!

So, to a friend and someone we have been proud to work with we say so long and good luck.



You Can Be A Point Of Light

President Bush believes that volunteers serving America can make a positive difference in the lives of others. His "Points of Light" initiative evolved from this belief.

Secretary Yeutter shares the President's belief and encourages all agencies to join in the USDA Points of Light. Its purpose is to encourage employees to participate in community-based activities and to identify opportunities to serve.

Employees may voluntarily share their community service activities with USDA by sending us their name, agency, office address and telephone number, the name of the community service organization, and a brief description of their activities. Address these to: USDA-FNS, **John Webster**, Director, Public Information Staff, Park Office Center, Room 819.

One example of USDA's spirit of volunteerism is our partnership with the Van Ness Elementary School. Van Ness and USDA were selected to receive one of the "Outstanding Partner of the Year" awards. The annual award was presented by the superintendent of D.C. Public Schools at the May 24 Thirtieth Annual Superintendent's Volunteer Recognition Ceremony.

USDA employees can be proud of their enthusiastic and generous support in collecting \$400,000 of the schools total of \$500,000 in grocery receipts for the educational campaign with Giant and Safeway Stores. As a result, Van Ness will order two Apple computers, two image printers, and several software packages from Giant Foods; and one IBM computer, one printer, and several software packages from Safeway Stores.

Ritchko Named as HNIS Administrator

Sue Ann Ritchko was sworn in as Administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service on April 23. Ritchko was vice president of consumer services for Price Chopper Supermarkets in Upstate New York for the past 15 years; during that time, she also held several local government positions. Earlier in

her career she served as regional consumer safety officer for the Food and Drug Administration.

Ritchko succeeds Laura Sims, who was Administrator from 1986 to 1988. James T. Heimbach served as Acting Administrator in the interim and now resumes his duties as Associate Administrator of HNIS.

Ritchko's varied background includes experience in food and nutrition programs and publications, education, consumer affairs, food policy, and public and government relations. Her local government service brings a grass-roots perspective to leadership for HNIS, and her private sector experience provides practical understanding of public perceptions and behavior. As Secretary Yeutter said in announcing the appointment, "Sue Ann's work in food and nutrition programs and consumer services is an ideal combination of experience for her new role as Administrator of HNIS."

Ritchko, who is married and has two children, lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, and maintains her home in Bethlehem, New York.

Stardom Rings for SERO Employee

by Walt Frazier

Move over Jack Nicholson! Take a back seat Morgan Freeman! One of FNS' own has made it to the big screen.

Darryl Wade of SERO's Atlanta Field Office made his acting debut in that blockbuster movie, "Glory," which was filmed in Henry County outside of McDonough, Georgia. The movie was based on experiences of an all black unit, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment, which played a pivotal role in Union successes during the Civil War.

FNS PICNIC !!!

WHEN:

Friday, July 27

12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

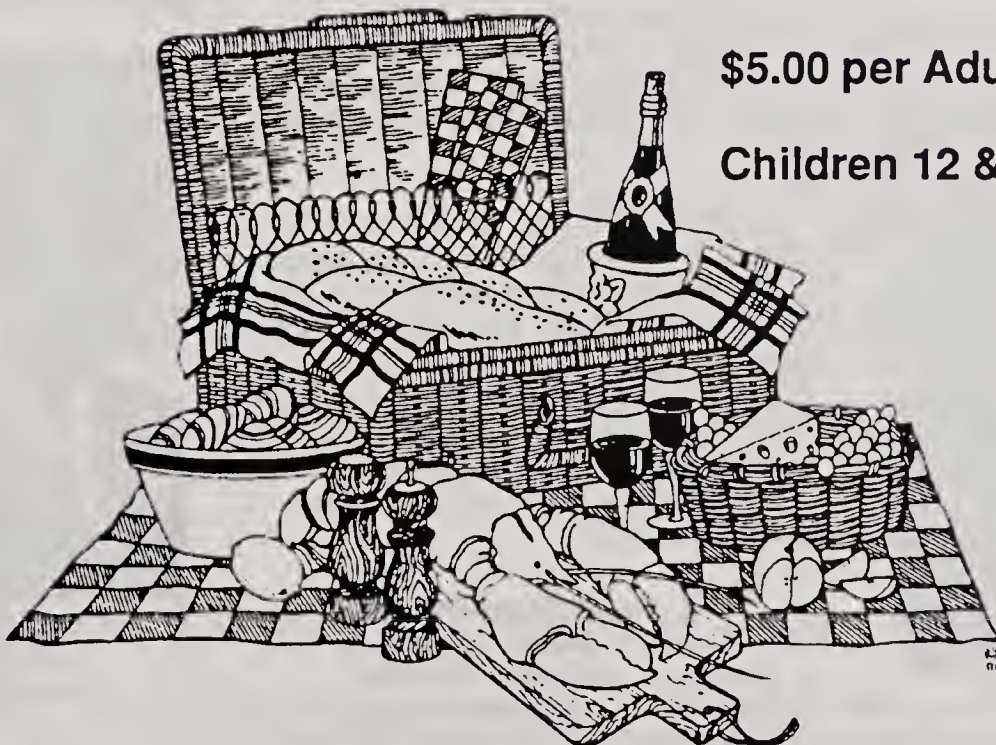
WHERE:

Fort Hunt Park

COST:

\$5.00 per Adult

Children 12 & Under Free



Tickets on Sale Now--see your Division Secretary!

When asked about his role in the film as an "extra," Wade replied, "I was cast as a runaway slave. I had been captured and was being returned to my owner."

Wade, who never imagined himself in the movies, said he found out about the job through a friend who is a casting agent. He decided to give it a try.

"It was quite an experience," said Wade. "I did it because of curiosity. I've never acted before, and the thought of being in the movies was exciting."

Adding to the excitement was the opportunity to work alongside film stars Matthew Broderick and Denzel Washington.

Although Wade's movie debut was quite an experience, he did have some complaints about life in front of the camera. "I didn't like the constant repetition of the scenes. We did some over 10 times. They turned into all day affairs, which is very tiresome," explained Wade.

"The end result was that I was treated well, I had a good time and if the opportunity should present itself again, I would respond. That is, if it doesn't conflict with my FNS work schedule," Wade added.



Darryl Wade of SERO'S Atlanta Field Office

"Commodity Foods" Newsletter Takes Third Place Award

The "Commodity Foods" newsletter placed third in a nationwide competition sponsored by Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE). ACE is a world-wide, 77 year-old professional organization of agricultural communications specialists in land grant colleges, the USDA, and the business world. It is dedicated to elevating the standards of agricultural communication and maintaining linkages among agricultural and communications organizations.

In its citation, ACE judged the newsletter "first-rate work...articles were great, photo quality superior, writing concise, format informative and useful." All involved in the newsletter's production are very proud.

Whitford, Temoshok, and Snow Receive Awards

On Wednesday, June 13, 1990, Secretary Yeutter presented the Department's Distinguished and Superior Service Awards to 111 individuals, teams, and groups for their outstanding achievements. This year, FNS was honored to have three individuals and a group receive honorary recognition from the Secretary. This year's winners were:

Debra Whitford, Special Nutrition Programs, Distinguished Service, David Temoshok, Financial Management, Distinguished Service, Judith Snow, Southwest Region, Dallas, Texas, Superior Service, FNS Hugo Relief Effort Group, Chris Martin, Group Leader, representing twenty-two group members from MARO, SERO, and ORO, Superior Service.

Following the Honor Awards Ceremony, a luncheon was held for the honorees at the Rosslyn WestPark Hotel. Over 115 employees attended the luncheon. Assistant Secretary Bertini, Betty Jo Nelson and George Braley congratulated the awardees and welcomed the family members, guests and employees who attended.

Compliance Investigator Receives "Unsung Heroes" Award

by Joe McLin, FSP

Compliance Branch Investigator Willie C. Thomas of Memphis, Tennessee, is the agency's recipient of one of the 1990 "Unsung Heroes" awards sponsored by USDA's Organization of Professional Employees. These awards are presented annually in recognition of valuable contributions made by USDA employees to the American public. Thomas and four other USDA employees were selected and honored at a May 10 Department ceremony.

By going beyond his job requirement, Thomas has demonstrated initiative and dedication in conducting undercover investigations of food stamp abuse. He has frequently assisted the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Office of the Inspector General in successful criminal investigations. Thomas works an area in which food stamp participation is high. Through his efforts against unscrupulous retailers, he has helped to ensure that food benefits are not diverted from those who truly need them.



Willie C. Thomas of the Memphis Compliance Office

Food Stamp Program News

- FY 89 Quality Control reports are in and letters of notification are on their way to 7 States who qualified for more than \$7 million in enhanced funding and 9 States who face potential liabilities of about \$56 million. We are pleased to report that the national average payment error rate has dropped slightly from last year. It is now at 9.80 percent and we hope to continue the drop with the help of regional efforts such as the SERO's \$6 Million Dollar Club, MARO's Ma Pat, and similar initiatives in other regions.
- POC staff were treated to a very formative and time relevant presentation on the Thrifty Food Plan by **Betty Peterkin**, retired Associate Administrator of HNIS. Betty developed the first plan in 1975 and updated it in 1983. She explained all the factors considered in developing and revising this low-cost, nutritious food plan, which has been used as the basis for the coupon allotment for the Food Stamp Program since 1976. A videotape was made for future viewing by those unable to attend.
- Next week we will be sending out the FY 1991 Food Stamp Management Evaluation Priority Areas to regional offices. Emphasis will be on client services with continued attention to program accountability.
- **Dave Mikelson**, the new Food Stamp Director in the Midwest Region was welcomed by Food Stamp staff when he visited POC this week to meet with his counterparts in Headquarters. We look forward to working with Dave and taking advantage of his experience as the MWRO's former WIC Program Director.

Two MPRO Tribal Organizations Mark 10th Anniversary In FDPIR

by Joanne Widner

Two Indian Tribal Organizations in the Mountain Plains Region were among the first reservations to operate their own Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) when that option was first offered 10 years ago. The Ute Mountain Reservation in southwestern Colorado and United Tribes of Kansas are commemorating their 10th anniversary of operation in May.

The two directors--**Eugene Knight** of Ute Mountain in Towaoc, Colorado, and **Frances Ramirez** of United Tribes in Horton, Kansas--were both involved with FDPIR when their tribes were authorized to become Indian Tribal Organizations.

Mother of FNS Employee Writes Biography

by Richard Dengrove

Mrs. Ida Libby Dengrove, mother of Richard Dengrove, FNS's librarian has written her biography entitled My Days in Court, Morrow, 1990. She did it in collaboration with Frank W. Martin. In the book, she discusses her experiences as a courtroom sketch artist for WNBC-TV in New York City 1972-1987. During that time, she sketched the Son of Sam, John Lennon, Ivan Boesky, G. Gordon Liddy, the Ayatollah Khomeini and others. The book contains many of these illustrations.

New Arrivals

Anna Kathrine "Katie", born May 13, 1990, to Larry Baukin and Martha (OGAPI) Newton

Geoffrey Josiah, born May 18, 1990, to T. Geoffrey (ORO) Gay and Susan Bean



Bertini's Bombers to Boldly Do Battle

July 10th has been set for the challenge trophy softball game between The Family Support Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services, and Bertini's Bombers. Several practices have been held, and word has it that HHS will have their hands full! The time and the location is still being decided. Bertini's Bombers want your support! There will be full coverage of this event in the next issue.

Striving for Excellence

In May, the senior executives of FNS, HNIS and the Office of the Consumer Advisor met with Assistant Secretary Bertini in Coolfont, West Virginia, to review her objectives for Food and Consumer Services. Bertini listed five major areas that we should focus on as we pursue our individual programs. These five areas include:

- **PROGRAM COORDINATION** designed to bring all the food assistance programs into greater conformity and more effective in serving our clients;
- **PROGRAM INTEGRITY** to insure that our clients receive full value for the services we provide and that fraud and inefficiency are eliminated;
- **WORKFORCE DIVERSITY** to guarantee opportunity, insure productivity and reward performance;
- **NUTRITION** focusing on the quality of the food assistance services we provide; and

- **CHILDREN** to emphasize our concern for the well-being of all children as our investment in the future.

As part of Bertini's program, the senior staff received briefings from **Hans Kuttner** from the White House Office of Policy Development, and from **Douglas Besharov** from the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

The next two days of the May Management Meeting were devoted to wide-ranging discussions on the future of FNS. Breakout groups and sessions were guided by facilitator, **Brenda Bryant** of Creative Associates, a management consulting firm.

A "Vision Statement", defining the ideals of FNS was drafted by the participants. Breakout groups worked to develop ways to attain the goals of the "Vision Statement", and finally, a list of twelve "core values" were developed to guide all FNS employees in the conduct of their work in the Agency.

In early June, **Betty Jo Nelsen** met in two all employee sessions to review the "Vision Statement" and the "core

values". These sessions were videotaped and furnished to the regional offices for their information.

"This vision statement is an ideal we'd like to see," Nelsen told employees at the meeting. "We know we have to work to achieve this, but it is realistic. We want to make FNS to most effective agency and the best place to work in the whole federal government. We can do that."

Questioned as to how the core values and the vision statement would be implemented, Nelsen indicated the "everyone in this agency has an interest in getting us to the ideals expressed in this vision statement. How we get there still has to be determined --- really its up to all of us to get us there. I want to know how you all think we should get there."

To that end, Nelsen has had an employee's suggestion box installed on the third floor outside the Credit Union office for FNS staffers to pass along their suggestions. She welcomes suggestions that will improve the work environment, communications, and the quality of our programs.

Speaking personally...

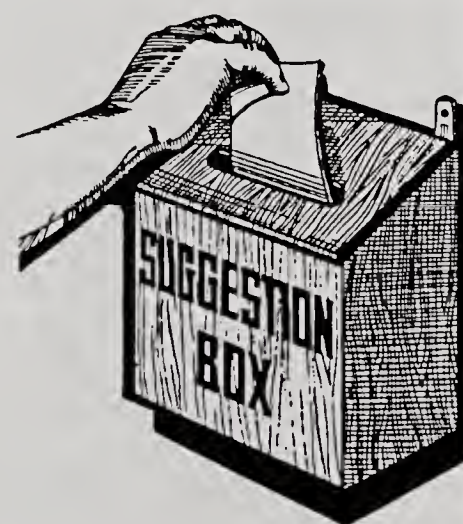
Already the Employee Suggestion Box is yielding good ideas. The first two have to do with communication and at a recent staff meeting we brainstormed ways to implement them.

One from **Mary Jane Whitney**, Child Nutrition Division, suggested "information sharing meetings with employees from each Division invited to discuss issues that relate to their jobs" as a way "to increase intra agency contact among employees" and trade experiences acquired by solving similar problems.

A second idea which also addressed a communication need came from **Celia Vila**, Program Information Division. She believes that FNS could improve communication by encouraging "Division Directors to meet monthly to discuss all areas of work and for deputies to meet bi-monthly to exchange information, encourage participation and give recognition to those with special accomplishments."

I think we're off to a good start, don't you?

Betty Jo Nelsen





SAY CHEESE

NERO employees sign "cheese" as part of their ten week sign language training course. The class, sponsored by NERO to improve communications with hearing-impaired employees and the community, is instructed by **Nancy Feldman Hogan**, a certified sign language interpreter and meets two hours each week.

"I'm happy we could offer this course to employees and I'm really very pleased with the turnout," said **Harry McLean**, NERO Administrator. "We'll see several concrete benefits coming out of this training for both individual employees and the office as a whole. Besides improving communications skills, it will increase understanding of some of the problems that hearing impaired individuals face. And it's one more thing we can do to expand our ability to recruit and hire."

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-0345	12/13	07/09/90	90-85	OAE
o Food Program Officer	(A)	GM-0120	15	07/09/90	90-82	WRO
o Home Economist or Food Technologist	(A)	GS-0493/ 1382	9/12	07/09/90	90-H-87	HNIS
o Food Program Officer	(A)	GM-0120	14	07/16/90	90-88	FDD
o Supvry. Home Econ.	(HNIS)	GM-0493	14	07/02/90	90-H-89	HNIS
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-0630	7/9	07/09/90	90-90	NTSD
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-0318	5/6	07/16/90	90-91	OAE
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-0493	7	07/09/90	90-H-92*	HNIS
o Accountant	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0510	12	07/10/90	90-93	ACD
o Management Asst.	(A-LCA)	GS-0344	4	07/06/90	90-H-94**	HNIS
o Contract Spec.	(FNS-HQ)	GS-1102	12	07/24/90	90-95***	ASD
o Grant Mgmt. Spec.	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0501	12	07/17/90	90-96	GMO

OFFICE LOCATION

ASD - Administrative Services Division
 ACD - Accounting Division
 FDD - Food Distribution Division
 HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
 NTSD - Nutrition and Technical Services
 Division
 OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation
 OGAPI - Office of Governmental Affairs
 and Public Information
 WRO - Western Regional Office
 GMO - Grants Management Office

* - Temporary NTE 12/31/90
 ** - Summer Appointment NTE 09/30/90
 *** - More than one position may be filled

AREA OF CONSIDERATION

(A) - All Sources
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition
 Service-Hdqs wide
 (LCA) - Local Commuting
 Area

Upcoming Events...

(this section will include any National meetings, conferences, holidays, or special events)

JULY

4 Independence Day!
 10 Challenge Trophy Softball FNS vs. FSA-HHS
 15-18 American School Food Service Association
 National Meeting, New Orleans, LA
 25 SWRO/WRO Bi-regional Commissions' Meeting
 San Francisco, CA

Darlene L. Barnes, Editor

The Friday Letter is published every two weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update your mailing address or to alter the number of copies you receive, please mail your changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive,